

## Summary of the answer to Bee's question on August 21

One of the main methods of gaining an understanding of the emptiness and thus the ultimate nature of a phenomenon is to search for the inherent existence of the phenomenon among its many parts (or bases of designation). This is done by subjecting the phenomenon, its parts, and possibly other related phenomena to ultimate analysis.

In the case of objects such as a car, a table, the "I", the body, etc., we search for their inherent existence among their spatial parts (e.g., the engine, steering wheel, etc. of the car)



and their temporal parts (e.g. yesterday's car, today's car, tomorrow's car, etc.).



However, it is not enough to analyze only these objects; we must also examine the functions and thus the actions that these phenomena perform, since we perceive these as existing inherently and generate many different afflictions in relation to them.

In the case of actions (such as walking, giving, producing, arising, etc.) the search for their inherent existence and thus their analysis is somewhat different and arguably more difficult than that of other objects, because although many actions can be observed, they are more abstract than, for example, the sense objects we can hold in our hands, smell, and so on. An action has no spatial parts and can only be perceived as an extended continuum made up of different moments in time. For example, in the action of walking, one foot is lifted and propelled forward. The foot then strikes the ground with the heel and rolls through to the toe, while the other foot is lifted and propelled forward, and so on.



Furthermore, since actions depend on their agent or subject (i.e., that which performs the action) and, in the case of certain actions, on their objects (that which receives or is affected by the action), agent and object are also analyzed along with the actions. Actions such as giving and producing have a direct object (and are expressed by transitive verbs), while actions such as walking and arising do not have such an object (and are expressed by intransitive verbs).

The first chapter of the *Fundamental Wisdom* begins with the ultimate analysis of the action of arising. This is because the verse of homage in this text pays homage to dependent arising by describing the eight attributes of the dependent arising of impermanent phenomena, which are presented in four pairs: (1) ceasing and arising, (2) annihilation and permanence, (3) coming and going, and (4) distinction and identity. Although of these eight, ceasing is mentioned first, Lama Tsongkhapa explains that since it is easier to understand the lack of inherent existence of ceasing after understanding the lack of inherent existence of arising, arising is analyzed first.

As part of the ultimate analysis of arising, the first line of verse four (“**An action has no conditions.**”) examines the agent or subject of arising, i.e. it examines that which arises. Since the arising of an impermanent phenomenon such as a sprout occurs at the time of the causes and conditions of the sprout, and since this arising (like all other phenomena) appears to our mind to exist intrinsically, the following analysis is presented:

Everything that exists has either arisen or not arisen; there is no third possibility. Therefore, since that which arises, the sprout, exists, it has necessarily either (a) arisen or (b) not arisen. If it (a) had arisen, there would be no point in it arising again, because it has already arisen and therefore already exists. If it (b) had not arisen, it could not be a sprout, for a sprout is an impermanent phenomenon and must have arisen in dependence on its causes and conditions.

Therefore, if arising existed objectively and from its own side, as it appears to our mind, that which arises, the sprout, would have to exist together with it. But such a sprout cannot be found, because it has neither arisen nor not arisen.